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by

WILLIAM A. HUNTER

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## PROVINCIAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE WESTERN INDIANS, 1754-58

BY WILLIAM A. HUNTER

THE courageous work of Christian Frederick Post, who in 1758 made two trips to the Ohio to persuade the western Indians to end their alliance with the French, is justly well-known. The success of Post's negotiations, and the fact that journals based on his notes were soon afterward published, assured him recognition. Other negotiations, less effective and less well documented, preceded Post's journeys, however, and deserve notice, if only to round out the story.

Instead of "western Indians," we might say "western Delawares"; for it was to the Delawares, who had special ties with the Province, that most of the official messages were addressed, and it was through their mediation that other western Indians made, in time, their first peaceful gestures. Most of the Ohio Delawares were from southeastern Pennsylvania, and represented the earliest removal of these Indians from their original home. Their acquaintance with Europeans had begun early, and their friendly relations with William Penn and his associates became in time almost legendary. Even their removal from the East was generally peaceful; they were not involved in the "Walking Purchase" executed in 1737, and they later dissociated themselves pointedly from Teedyuscung's accusations and reconciliations. Since it seems probable that at the time of the French and Indian War almost all the adult Ohio Delawares were eastern-born or of eastern parentage, the peaceful nature of their relations with English settlers is of some importance.

Subsequent to their first removal, apparently, these Delawares from southeastern Pennsylvania became commonly known as Unamies.<sup>1</sup> Some of them settled on the Ohio shortly before 1730;

<sup>1</sup> This name was so unfamiliar in 1757 that when Teedyuscung used it in Council, August 30, he was asked who the Unamies were; and he replied that "they were a distinct Tribe of Delaware Indians, and that Alomipees was formerly the King of that Tribe" (MS. Provincial Record, Vol. Q, p. 90; see *Colonial Records*, VII, 726). Another Indian informant of this same period said that in William Penn's time the Unami Indians lived on



others followed at later dates, especially after the death of their chief Alumapees (Sassoonan) at Shamokin (Sunbury), in 1747. By 1750, the Delawares' western settlements were scattered from the upper Allegheny to the Monongahela, and westward as far as the Scioto.

It is true, of course, that the Delawares were not the only Ohio Indians of eastern origin. There were Shawnees, too, who had lived in the East, but only as temporary and somewhat troublesome guests. Numbers of Six Nations Indians, the overlords of the Ohio country, also lived there; but on the outbreak of the French and Indian War the Six Nations Council decided on a neutral course, and called these Indians home from the Ohio; those who did not leave remained as French allies.

Although it may be convenient, in discussing Provincial Indian affairs, to speak of the alienation of the western Delawares at the beginning of hostilities in 1754-55, and of a reconciliation with them in 1758, this involves some misrepresentation. Both the breach and the reunion were gradual, and neither was ever complete.

When Colonel Washington's Virginians advanced toward French Ft. Duquesne in 1754, they were accompanied by the Six Nations' "Half King," Tanacharison, and some of his associates. The Half King's policy of active opposition to the French was subsequently repudiated by the Six Nations Council, but it appears to have been accepted at the time by the Delawares in the area about present Pittsburgh. Following the Virginian surrender at Ft. Necessity, on July 4, two of Washington's officers were taken as hostages to Ft. Duquesne, where they were visited by friendly Indians, including, it may be noted, the Delaware "king," Shingas. From this place, one of the hostages, Captain Stobo, succeeded in sending two letters, one smuggled out by a Six Nations Indian, the other by a Delaware; the latter messenger, best known as Delaware George, delivered his letter to George Croghan at Aughwick (Shirleysburg, Pa.) on August 4. Although this incident is not part of our story of diplomatic relations, it illustrates the normal friendliness of

Delaware River below Tohickon Creek, while the Delawares of whom Nutimus was chief lived above Tohickon (Friends Book Store, Phila.: Papers relating to the Friendly Association, I, 407). Alumapees had been conspicuous in Provincial Indian affairs; and among his followers were Pisquitomen, Nenatcheehunt, Lapagheton, and Quetahicond, mentioned in the present article.

some of the Ohio Delawares, and it serves to introduce an Indian of whom more remains to be said.<sup>2</sup>

A month later, Delaware George was again at Aughwick, when a Delaware delegation headed by the Beaver, a brother of Shingas, came to ask Tanacharison for protection against the French—protection which Tanacharison confessed himself unable to give without approval from the Iroquois Council. At this same meeting, the Beaver addressed himself to Conrad Weiser, reminding him of the treaty with William Penn, “which We on our side so well as You have observed as much as possible to this Day. We always looked upon You to be one Flesh and Blood with Us.”<sup>3</sup>

Braddock's defeat in July, 1755, left these Delawares defenseless, however, and persuaded many of them to accept the French; and by October, Delawares led by the Beaver's brother Shingas participated in attacks on the settlers about Ft. Cumberland (Cumberland, Md.).<sup>4</sup> Immediately afterward, the Ohio Indians carried the war to the Susquehanna, and on October 16 massacred settlers on Penns Creek, below Shamokin. This blow terrified not only the white people but also the Indians of the area, most of whom fled up the Susquehanna North Branch and many of whom, including Teedyuscung, now turned against the English. The Province retaliated by declaring war on the Delawares and by offering a reward for the heads of the Delaware warriors Shingas and Captain Jacobs.<sup>5</sup>

In September, 1756, Pennsylvania militia struck back at Kittanning, where Shingas and his relatives had established themselves; Captain Jacobs was killed, and Shingas and his brothers retired farther west, to Kuskuskies (New Castle). In November the Provincial authorities coaxed Teedyuscung down to Easton for a reconciliation. It was hoped that the implications of this sword-or-olive branch approach would be appreciated by the western Indians, and that Teedyuscung would use his influence to further the effort to bring them, too, to the council fire. The consequence was that, for years afterward, Provincial negotiations with these western Delawares were haunted by the equivocal and unstable

<sup>2</sup> Provincial Record, M, 395-96, 412-13; *Colonial Records*, VI, 140-43, 161-63. (Cited hereafter as PR and CR, respectively.)

<sup>3</sup> PR, M, 403-11; CR, VI, 151-60.

<sup>4</sup> PR, N, 239; CR, VI, 643.

<sup>5</sup> The reward was advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 1, 1756.

personality of this Indian, whose influence on the Ohio was largely imaginary.

Aided by a grant of £100 from the Friends, George Croghan, whom Sir William Johnson had delegated to supervise Pennsylvania Indian negotiations, undertook in January, 1757, to send messages to the Ohio Indians.<sup>6</sup> The two Conestoga Indians whom he first sent out turned back because of heavy snow; but a second party, who left Ft. Augusta (Sunbury) at the end of February,<sup>7</sup> were more successful, as three of them reported on May 9, at Lancaster. They had delivered their message to the Delaware chief Custaloga, at Venango (Franklin, Pa.), they said, and he had taken them to consult the Senecas. Garistagee (Hagaastas, or Mud Eater), leader of the anti-British Geneseo division of the Senecas, advised the Delawares to make no reply, however, on the ground that the wampum belt sent with the message was not appropriate. On their return trip the messengers saw Teedyuscung at Tioga (Athens, Pa.), and he liked the Seneca criticism so well that he parroted it as his own.<sup>8</sup> In spite of the Seneca rejection, however, the message made an impression; and a captured Delaware warrior reported, on May 12, that "The Messengers from Philadelphia were in some Delaware Towns, and they [the Delawares] Seem'd desirous of Peace. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

When, on July 19, another of Croghan's messengers, who had gone on to Kuskuskies, returned, by way of Venango, he brought more news: "That Delaware George . . . was rejoyced when he heard that the English inclined to make peace . . . he said he had between forty and fifty men besides Women and children, who have never struck the English. . . ."<sup>10</sup>

This last messenger returned just on the eve of a treaty at Easton at which, on August 3, Governor Denny gave Teedyuscung a formal peace belt.<sup>11</sup> On August 29, not long after his departure from Easton, Teedyuscung appeared in Philadelphia to tell the Governor that on his way home from the treaty he had met, above

<sup>6</sup> PR, P, 139-140, 149; CR, VII, 391, 403; *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, II, 756-60.

<sup>7</sup> *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, II, 765-66, 782-83.

<sup>8</sup> PR, P, 235-37; CR, VII, 514-16.

<sup>9</sup> MS. Provincial Papers, XXII, 55; see *Pennsylvania Archives*, original series, III, 147.

<sup>10</sup> *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, VII, 286.

<sup>11</sup> PR, Q, 1-70; CR, VII, 649-714.

Wyoming (Wilkes-Barre), messengers sent by "Menatochyand and Netowatquelemond, Two of the Principal Men of the Ohio Indians," inquiring about peace. Teedyuscung said he had entrusted his new peace belt to his oldest son, Amos, whom he had sent back with the messengers.<sup>12</sup> Of the two Ohio Delawares named by Teedyuscung, the second is certainly the chief otherwise known as Newcomer. The other chief (whose name appears elsewhere as Nenatcheehunt) is identified in a letter in which Governor Denny informed Sir William Johnson that the messengers had been sent "by Delaware George and some other friendly Indians," and that Delaware George had waited at Venango for a reply to his message.<sup>13</sup>

On November 25, according to minutes of the Provincial Council, Delaware George himself was in Philadelphia and talked with the Governor. Perhaps deliberately, no record of their conferences is included in the minutes.<sup>14</sup> The significant fact, however, is the evidence that not all the Ohio Delawares had turned against the English, and that some of them were responsive to peace overtures.

Teedyuscung's peace belt, meantime, was having strange adventures. That chief had promised to spread far and wide the news of the treaty at Easton; and it appears that he gave the belt to two Indians, Lapaghpeton and Penahughal (Tom Leman), who carried it up Chemung River to the Seneca country. However, Tom Leman afterward reported that Teedyuscung had been drunk, and had sent no message with the belt, leaving its significance to be inferred from its appearance.<sup>15</sup> At about this same time, Teedyuscung sent another of his sons, John Jacob, off on the warpath. This young man and some others left Ft. Augusta on October 24, and returned there December 12, having gone, they said, to Venango, where they shot at some Frenchmen, talked with some chiefs, and heard of Tom Leman's errand.<sup>16</sup>

Early in 1758, the western Indians sent out more peace emissaries. On February 14-15, ten messengers arrived at Ft. Augusta, where they performed the calumet ritual in token of their peaceful errand. Two weeks later, five of them left for Bethlehem to meet Teedyus-

<sup>12</sup> PR, Q, 89-90; CR, VII, 725-27.

<sup>13</sup> *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, II, 752-53.

<sup>14</sup> PR, Q, 130; CR, VII, 768.

<sup>15</sup> PR, Q, 353; CR, VIII, 200-01; Provincial Papers, XXVII, 23: "Examination of Lawrence Burk, 9 July 1758."

<sup>16</sup> PR, Q, 135-36; CR, VII, 773-74.

cung,<sup>17</sup> who accompanied three of the five to Philadelphia, arriving there on March 11. Teedyuscung was so elated by what he chose to regard as the fruits of his diplomacy that it seems to have been somewhat difficult to ascertain the precise nature of the messengers' errand.

They had been delegated, it appeared, by eight "nations": Ottawas northwest of Detroit, Miamies, Chippewas, Ottawas south of Lake Erie, Caughnawagas (French Mohawks), "Mahoowa—live in an Island in One of the lakes," Potawatemies, and Norridge-wocks of St. Francis.<sup>18</sup> The messengers themselves, identified as Willemegihany, Moholiecan, and Gelapamind, seem to have been Delawares: The first appears in subsequent negotiations as Willemaghikink or James; and the last has a name apparently identical with that of Kelipama, a brother of Newcomer.<sup>19</sup> Finally, after Teedyuscung had complained of the delay, James was given a somewhat general but well disposed reply to the western Indians; and on March 25 the conferences closed.<sup>20</sup>

On April 10, Teedyuscung reappeared in Philadelphia, with an Indian named Essowayowallund or Daniel, from Secaughcung; the Indians had chosen this man as messenger, Teedyuscung said, because of the long absence of the previous messenger, James. By now Teedyuscung was so elevated that he assured the Council (who received him in the Governor's absence) that there was no need for the English to send troops to the Ohio: Teedyuscung himself would strike the French, and drive the survivors into the sea! At the close of this conference, Daniel was sent with a message to the Senecas; and Teedyuscung sent his sons, Amos and John Jacob, and three other Indians with another message to the Ohio.<sup>21</sup>

James, meanwhile, had carried his message to Newcomer, then living at Saukunk (Beaver, Pa.), who conducted the messenger to King Beaver, at Kuskuskies.<sup>22</sup> The Delaware Indians here were quite ready to consider peace proposals, at least to the extent of making further inquiries about them. The alliance with the French was not entirely to their taste, and they had heard of General

<sup>17</sup> Historical Society of Pennsylvania: Shippen Family Papers, MS. "Journal by Capt: Jos: Shippen at Fort Augusta," entries for Feb. 14-15, 28.

<sup>18</sup> PR, Q, 181; CR, VIII, 35.

<sup>19</sup> PR, T, 22; CR, IX, 226.

<sup>20</sup> PR, Q, 175-202; CR, VIII, 29-56.

<sup>21</sup> PR, Q, 236-46; CR, VIII, 86-97.

<sup>22</sup> Provincial Papers, XXVII, 8: "Names of Indians from Wyomink by Frederick Post. delivered 4 July 1758."



Forbes' preparations for his advance on Ft. Duquesne. It appears that two leading Delawares accompanied James on his return: Pisquitomen, elder brother of the Beaver and Shingas, and Keekyuscung.

The emissaries made their way first to Secaughcung (Canisteo), a settlement of Unami Delawares who formerly had lived about Shamokin. Here the Unami chief Quetahicond joined the messengers, together with some of his townsmen, among whom were Tom Leman, Daniel, and a white trader, Lawrence Burck, who lived at Secaughcung with his Indian wife. The whole delegation went down to Wyoming; and the Moravian missionary, Post, sent by the Governor with a message to Teedyuscung, met them there on June 27.

The Indians from the Ohio, Post found, were uneasy because of unfriendly stories they had heard; and, in words that said little for Teedyuscung's boasted diplomacy, "They complained strongly that they never had heard any Satisfactory Account of the Peace made at Easton, nor any Treaties that had been held, nor received any Belts 'till now lately."<sup>23</sup> Post encouraged them to go on to Philadelphia, where they arrived on July 7, accompanied by Teedyuscung and some of his followers.

The conference which followed, July 7 to 12, is well-known, and led to the decision to send Post to the Ohio with Pisquitomen, to persuade the Delawares to withdraw from the war and to send delegates to a general Indian treaty at Easton.<sup>24</sup> Over Teedyuscung's protests—he argued that his son John Jacob had just returned from the Ohio and could tell all that needed to be known—Post set out from Bethlehem on July 19. Besides Post, the party included James, Daniel, and a Jersey Delaware interpreter, Isaac Still. They arrived at Kuskuskies on August 13.

King Beaver's friendly reception of Post; Delaware George's excitement over his coming (he "said he had not slept all night"); Shingas' concern that "if he came to the English, they would hang him, as they had offered a great reward for his head"; the less friendly reception at Saukunk; and Daniel's treachery—all these are details of the later and better known story of Post's diplomatic missions, which needs no retelling here.

<sup>23</sup> PR, Q, 298-99; CR, VIII, 143-45.

<sup>24</sup> Provincial Papers, XXVII, 50; *Pennsylvania Archives*, original series, III, 456-69. These minutes were never copied into the manuscript Provincial Record, though space was left for them (see CR, VIII, 145).









